UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.17/IFF/1998/2
19 June 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
Second session
Geneva, 24 August-4 September 1998

Programme element I.a

Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report describes the many ways in which countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and major groups have become actively engaged in the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF). The sheer volume of these activities is impressive, and shows the degree to which the many interested parties have been engaged in and have taken note of the outcome of the IPF process. These have been further encouraged by a number of references to the outcome of IPF and endorsement of the Panel's proposals for action by major international and intergovernmental forums, and by increasingly consistent instructions on forests to intergovernmental organizations from their governing bodies.

A large number of countries, both developing and developed, are in the process of reviewing their forest policies and their national forest programmes in the context of IPF conclusions and proposals for action. The focus on national forest programmes as a generic expression of a wide variety of initiatives by all countries and for all types of forests has led to a situation in which much wider participation has been achieved concerning tropical, temperate and boreal forests, in terms of engage ent by both

98-19686 (E) 060898

/...

developed and developing countries. At the same time, however, many countries, particularly the least developed countries with low cover of forest and other wooded land, have not received adequate international support for their forest-related activities. The main avenues of support to national forest programmes of the past no longer exist, and new and innovative mechanisms will have to be created. The establishment of mainstream, decentralized, flexible and reliable support mechanisms represents a major challenge for the international community.

Information on the implementation of IPF proposals for action carried out by international, regional organizations and under existing instruments is also presented in the report of the Secretary-General in programme element II.e.(i) (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/5).

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION		1 - 5	5
	A. Mandate	1 - 2	5
	B. Scope	3 - 5	5
I.	ENDORSEMENTS OF THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS	6 - 7	6
II.	HIGHLIGHTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION	8 - 19	6
III.	ASSESSMENT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	20 - 52	8
	A. Progress through national forest and land-use programmes	20 - 22	8
	B. Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation	23 - 24	8
	C. Traditional forest-related knowledge	25	9
	D. Fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought	26 - 29	9
	E. Impact of airborne pollution on forests	30 - 32	10
	F. Needs and requirements of developing and other countries with low forest cover	33	10
	G. Financial assistance	34	10
	H. Technology transfer and capacity-building and Information	35	11
	I. Assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests	36 - 41	11
	J. Forest research	42 - 44	11
	K. Methodologies for the proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests	45	12
	L. Criteria and indicators for sustainable development	46 - 51	12
	M. Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services	52	13

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
IV.	CONCLUSIONS AND PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS FOR ACTION	53 - 83	13
	A. Progress through national forest and land-use programmes	54 - 56	13
	B. Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation	57	14
	C. Traditional forest-related knowledge	58	14
	D. Fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought	59 - 60	15
	E. Impact of airborne pollution on forests	61 - 62	15
	F. Needs and requirements of developing and other countries with low forest cover	63	16
	G. Financial assistance	64	16
	H. Technology transfer and capacity-building and information	65	16
	I. Assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests	66 - 69	16
	J. Forest research	70 - 71	17
	K. Methodologies for the proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests	72	17
	L. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management	73 - 78	18
	M. Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services	79 - 83	19

INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The present report covers programme element I.a of the programme of work of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, "Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests".

2. Work under programme element I.a is guided by the Forum's decision at its first session that this programme element should promote and facilitate implementation, by, for example, considering the launching of programmes by countries, United Nations agencies, other international organizations and major groups to implement all proposals for action developed by IPF; and considering appropriate mechanisms for the mobilization of financial resources, institutional and human resources and capacity-building, paying particular attention to the role of women (see E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4, para. 7, category I).

B. Scope

3. The present report, which has been prepared by the IFF secretariat, is based on inputs received from member organizations of the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF): the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the Department for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and the World Bank.

4. The nature of the present report is almost by definition a "good news story" since it reflects a mandate to consider the launching of programmes. It describes the many ways in which countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and major groups have become actively engaged in the implementation of the IPF proposals for action. The sheer volume of these activities is impressive, and shows the degree to which the many interested parties have been engaged in and have taken note of the outcome of the IPF process. It should not, however, be seen as part of a systematic reporting framework, which will only emerge as progress is made under IFF programme element I.b.

5. The present report describes the endorsements of the IPF proposals for action, the highlights of implementation activities to date and the assessment of recent developments; and identifies the major issues that IFF may wish to address at its second session, including specific policy measures and preliminary proposals for action.

I. ENDORSEMENTS OF THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

6. The intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests and the proposals for action of IPF have stimulated a number of initiatives and activities around the world, which have been further encouraged by a number of references to the outcome of IPF and endorsement of the Panel's proposals for action by major international and intergovernmental forums, including the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development; the FAO Committee on Forestry; the Commonwealth Forestry Association; the Eleventh World Forestry Congress; the Edinburgh Meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government; the Commonwealth Forestry Conference; the Versailles meeting organized by the High Council of Forests and Forest Products of France; the International Tropical Timber Council; the Fourth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Group of Eight Major Industrialized Countries (G-8) summit at Birmingham and the G-8 Action Programme on Forests; and the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.

7. Other indirect effects of the outcome of the IPF process include:

(a) Increasingly consistent instructions on forests to intergovernmental organizations from their governing bodies;

(b) Strengthening international networks among foresters, including anglophone, francophone and lusophone foresters' associations;

(c) Increased attention to the valuation of forest services, which took a leap forward when the Fourth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held at Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997, decided to recognize the significant role of forests as a carbon sink.

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

8. A large number of countries, both developing and developed - including Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Finland, Switzerland, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Honduras, Uganda and many others - are in the process of reviewing their forest policies and their national forest programmes in the context of the IPF conclusions and proposals for action.

9. The international donor community, in particular the Forestry Advisers Group, has made efforts to structure international cooperation related to forests in support of the IPF proposals for action. The Forestry Advisers Group has agreed to place a high priority on supporting national forest programmes.

10. The G-8 Action Programme on Forests, announced on 9 May 1998, contains priority activities and support programmes in support of the IPF proposals for action that will be carried out jointly or individually by G-8 members in such areas as monitoring and assessment; national forest programmes; protected areas; the private sector; and illegal logging.

11. There are also several government-sponsored initiatives organized in support of IPF proposals for action and IFF activities, including:

(a) The six-country initiative on the theme "Putting the IPF proposals for action into practice at the national level", in support of programme element I.a of the IFF programme of work, which is sponsored by the Governments of Finland, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Uganda and the United Kingdom, in cooperation with the IFF secretariat, UNDP and FAO;

(b) The International Consultation on Research and Information Systems in Forestry (ICRIS), which is sponsored by Indonesia and Austria in cooperation with the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO), CIFOR, FAO and the IFF Secretariat;

(c) The Non-Governmental Organizations/Government of Costa Rica initiative on underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, to be hosted by Costa Rica and organized by non-governmental organizations and the Government of Costa Rica, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme.

12. The members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) have prepared an implementation plan entitled "Inter-agency partnership on forests: implementation of IPF proposals for action by ITFF".

13. FAO has organized three regional workshops on the implementation of IPF proposals for action related in particular to national forest programmes, at Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in February 1998; at Dakar, in April 1998; and at Santiago, in June 1998.

14. World Bank initiatives include activities under the recently created World Bank-World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Alliance; a series of meetings convened by the President of the Alliance between forest industry chief executive officers and environmental organizations; participation as an active member of Forest Trends (formerly the Forest Market Transformation Initiative); and strengthening the role of the World Bank in the IFF/ITFF process.

15. UNDP has initiated implementation of its new programme entitled "Global programme on forests", which will concentrate on the implementation of IPF proposals for action. The pilot phase is being launched with the involvement of Costa Rica, Cameroon, Guyana and Viet Nam.

16. The International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) has authorized the Executive Director of ITTO to undertake the necessary studies, within the scope of its mandate, to support the IFF process and the implementation of the IPF proposals for action.

17. Several regional and eco-regional processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management continue to be active and to further refine their approaches and implementation.

18. Several countries, the private sector and a number of non-governmental organizations are engaged in evaluating existing voluntary mechanisms for forest products certification.

19. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization has formed the Wood Industries Advisers Group, with an industrial orientation modelled to some extent after the Forestry Advisers Group.

III. ASSESSMENT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A. Progress through national forest and land-use programmes

20. The focus on national forest programmes as a generic expression of a wide variety of country-led and country-driven initiatives by all countries and for all types of forests has led to a situation in which much wider participation has been achieved concerning tropical, temperate and boreal forests, in terms of engagement by both developed and developing countries, as for example in the so-called six-country initiative, and as reflected by the significant number of industrialized countries currently engaged in putting IPF proposals for action into practice at the national level.

21. At the same time, however, many countries, particularly the least developed countries with low forest cover and other wooded land, have been left with very inadequate international support for their forest-related activities. The post-United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) period saw official development assistance (ODA) in support to national forest programmes reaching a peak in 1993, with significant reductions ever since, even taking into account forestry components in rural development programmes. Financial and technical support for developing countries with low forest cover is less likely to be satisfactory.

22. The three regional workshops organized by FAO in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as recent meetings of the Forestry Advisers Group, have shown that some of the main avenues of support to national forest programmes of the past no longer exist, and that new and innovative mechanisms will have to be created. The establishment of mainstream, decentralized, flexible and reliable support mechanisms represent a major challenge for the international community.

B. Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation

23. Considerable new and comprehensive information on the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation is expected to become available as a result of the work and final report of the World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development; the planned UNEP reports entitled: "In-depth analysis of underlying causes and their regional variances of deforestation and forest degradation", and "Strategic and policy options to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation", as well as the non-governmental organizations/Government of Costa Rica initiative on underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, to be hosted by Costa Rica and organized by non-governmental organizations and the Government of Costa Rica, in cooperation with UNEP.

24. The conclusions of this global workshop will be reflected in UNEP's inputs to the Secretary-General's report for the third session of IFF.

C. Traditional forest-related knowledge

25. The recent decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its fourth meeting, held at Bratislava in May 1998, address important issues related to traditional forest-related knowledge, namely:

(a) Decision IV/7, in which the Conference adopted a programme of work on forest biological diversity;

(b) Decision IV/9, in which the Conference established an ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working group on the implementation of article 8 (j);

(c) Decision IV/8 on matters related to benefit sharing, in which the Conference established a panel of experts appointed by Governments, composed of representatives from the private and public sectors, as well as representatives of indigenous and local communities;

(d) Decision IV/15 on the relationship of the Convention with the Commission on Sustainable Development and biodiversity-related conventions, other international agreements, institutions and processes of relevance;

(e) Decision IV/9, in which the Conference invited the World Intellectual Property Organization to take into account the lifestyles and the traditional systems of access and use of the knowledge, technologies and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles.

D. Fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought

26. The overall situation reflects only a limited number of new initiatives. It should be noted, however, that significant activities are already ongoing in many countries and are included in the programmes of several international organizations. Some collaborative activities are under negotiation between the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and United Nations agencies, such as FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

27. In countries affected by desertification and drought, national action to address issues related to dryland forest ecosystems have been reinforced by parallel processes centred on (a) developments related to sustainable forest management; (b) the implementation of the above-mentioned Convention; (c) national environmental planning; and (d) various regional/national planning frameworks supporting development, village land resources management and natural resources development.

28. Several initiatives have been taken at the country level regarding analysis of past experience, education, training, extension, participatory research, local knowledge, participatory management in the framework of the revision of their policies.

29. The strengthening of partnerships between local communities, the Government, non-governmental organizations and other groups, one of the key components of the implementation of the Convention, is already under way in each country engaged in the national action plan exercise, very often supported by international organizations.

E. Impact of airborne pollution on forests

30. The fourteenth meeting of the Task Force of the Economic Commission for Europe International Cooperative Programme on the Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests (ICP Forests) was held in May 1998. Results and conclusions of the annual report on forest conditions in Europe of the ECE Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, published in June 1998, were not available at the time of preparation of the present report.

31. No new national strategies for the prevention of airborne pollution damaging trees or the reduction of damaging transboundary pollution have been developed. There is, however, a new draft European Union regulation on sulphur emissions.

32. The work of ICP Forests has continued, involving European and North American countries. Notable progress has been made in the translation of theory into practice in terms of the critical loads approach.

F. Needs and requirements of developing and other countries with low forest cover

33. Work has been initiated by UNEP on analysing available definitions of low forest cover (LFC). This work, considered by IUFRO in collaboration with FAO, will develop a definition of low forest cover and a revised list of countries with low forest cover based on the revised definition of low forest cover. UNEP will also facilitate an inter-agency consultation to discuss the definition of low forest cover and the revised list. The outcome of all these activities will be included in UNEP's input to the Secretary-General's report for substantive discussions at the third session of IFF.

G. Financial assistance

34. Despite the increasing trend of private capital flows to developing countries, the decline in official international capital flow is a matter of serious concern because long-term development aid catalyses and complements private-sector investments (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/7).

H. Technology transfer and capacity-building and information

35. Implementation of sustainable forest management has been slow in many countries, partly due to insufficient awareness and appreciation of the potential benefits that can be derived from the use of environmentally sound and socially acceptable technologies. There have been insufficient efforts in the area of comprehensive assessment of technology generation and needs (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/4).

I. Assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests

36. A number of national and subregional capacity-building workshops and expert consultations have been held or are scheduled to take place. These will contribute to the quality of national-level forest resource assessments and for the forest resources assessment by the year 2000 (FRA 2000).

37. A revision is planned of the FAO forest inventory manual. Through advances in geographical information systems and remote-sensing technology, under FRA 2000 techniques are being developed for assessing forests available for wood supply and deforestation processes in developing countries.

38. Memoranda of understanding have been developed between FAO and a number of key international organizations, countries and other organizations with competence in assessments to contribute to FRA 2000, and to share the results of the assessment effectively with the international community. A global strategic plan for global forest resources assessments has been developed.

39. A core set of harmonized definitions for forest and related aspects of forests has been developed for global reporting of FRA 2000 and progress made on the harmonization of definitions for forestry within FAO and external cooperators, such as the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the European Union and the World Bank. IUFRO is proposing to sponsor a forum to address the issue of information systems. Progress is being made in the collection of core set of information on a broad range of forest values, including non-timber values for all developing and industrialized countries.

40. It remains clear that in many cases, developing countries need technical and financial assistance to enhance their capacity to conduct forest resources assessments, and to use such information for policy and planning of sustainable forest management.

41. Several components of FRA 2000 are still unfunded, in particular the remote-sensing programme, for which no extrabudgetary resources have been received.

J. Forest research

42. Renewal and redefinition is needed in forest science. A work plan for a new international network on forest research may be modelled on the research agenda presented and discussed during the IPF process. The Austria-Indonesia

initiative (ICRIS) has commissioned papers to review and synthesize the state of knowledge in particular areas, and to produce comprehensive reports that also identify gaps to be filled by further interdisciplinary research.

43. The new broad international concern of societies about forest issues requires a re-examination of forest research institutions. What kind of new approaches and new alliances are needed now and for the future? How research is conducted is as important as what research is done.

44. The ICRIS meeting sponsored by Austria and Indonesia is intended to produce much more than a "shopping list of worthy research topics" according to today's perception of what is needed and what is possible. It aims to engage participants in an informal exchange of ideas and to build consensus. Exploration of an appropriate mechanism to disburse international funds to support high-priority, collaborative research activities is also a major focus of the agenda at the ICRIS meeting.

K. Methodologies for the proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests

45. The Kyoto Protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has provided a major incentive for countries to engage in the valuation of forests as carbon sinks. There is also growing recognition of the need to quantify services provided by forests in such areas as biological diversity, water and ecotourism. The World Bank will prepare inputs related to this topic under IFF programme element II.d for the substantive discussion at the third session of IFF, in May 1999.

L. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

46. Since UNCED, about 100 countries have participated in international processes aimed at the definition of criteria to characterize sustainable forest management. Such criteria have proven to be useful tools in country-driven efforts to incorporate a wide array of forest-related considerations within a common conceptual framework. Corresponding indicators are also under development to help define these criteria quantitatively and qualitatively; enable countries to analyse and monitor the effects of forest management interventions over time; and improve forestry practices to meet defined country-level goals, as well as international commitments.

47. Interest in the development, testing and implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management has steadily grown, as evidenced by the dynamic activities carried out within the framework of a number of currently ongoing regional and eco-regional initiatives.

48. Forest management unit-level or operational-level criteria and indicators have been developed to complement national criteria and indicators within the framework of a number of the international initiatives mentioned above, including the ITTO guidelines, the Pan-European process, the Tarapoto proposal, the Central American process of Lepaterique, and to a lesser extent, the Near

East and the Dry Zone Africa processes. CIFOR has been leading the work of testing criteria and indicators at the forest management unit level, and has conducted innovative work on social indicators in a number of countries.

49. Sustained support is needed to help countries that are currently not actively participating in the international criteria and indicators initiatives to undertake this activity, particularly countries with low forest cover or with significant areas of "other wooded land".

50. Increased efforts are urgently needed in country-level implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Countries that have advanced in respect to implementation should be encouraged to share their experiences and to assist others.

51. Strengthened efforts are needed by the countries concerned to ensure the compatibility of criteria and indicators implemented at the national level and those being developed at the forest management unit level.

M. Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services

52. Recent developments may pose both new opportunities for and challenges to sustainable forest management; such developments include illegal trade, species extinction, recent market trends and their implications for sustainable forest management, and international obligations and agreements (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/3).

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

53. It should be noted that in several cases, the conclusions and proposals for action set out below are not new but only reflect a need to focus on particular aspects of the proposals for action of IPF in the light of the experiences gained since February 1997.

A. Progress through national forest and land-use programmes

Conclusions

54. There is now an intergovernmental consensus on the need for comprehensive forest policy frameworks or national forest programmes, including the tropical, temperate and boreal forest regions, and engagement by all countries. In addition to many developing countries, a significant number of industrialized countries are currently engaged in putting the IPF proposals for action into practice at the national level through a revision of their national forest programme.

55. Some of the main avenues of the past international support to the formulation and implementation of national forest programmes in developing countries no longer exist, and new and innovative mechanisms will have to be

created. The establishment of mainstream, decentralized, flexible and reliable support mechanisms, in particular for the least developed countries with low forest cover, represent a major challenge for the international community.

Preliminary proposals for action

56. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Encourage all countries to continue implementation of the IPF proposals for action in the context of their revised national forest programmes;

(b) Urge the international donor community and international organizations to further develop mainstream financial and technical assistance mechanisms for support to national forest programmes in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular in countries with low forest cover and fragile forest ecosystems;

(c) Encourage countries and international organizations to analyse potential synergies at the national level between national forest programmes and requirements under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other instruments;

(d) Urge countries and international organizations to create and/or strengthen partnership agreements to encourage long-term political commitment and relevant, effective, sustained and reliable donor support; to facilitate participation by the private sector and major groups; and to recognize the special role of ODA in meeting the needs of countries with low forest cover where the private sector is less likely to invest.

B. Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation

57. The conclusions of the expert meeting co-sponsored by non-governmental organizations, the Government of Costa Rica and UNEP on underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation will be reflected in UNEP's inputs to the Secretary-General's report on this topic for substantive discussion at the third session of IFF.

C. Traditional forest-related knowledge

58. In accordance with decision IV/7 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Executive Secretary of the Convention, in implementing the work programme on forest biological diversity, will actively continue collaboration and cooperation with the IFF secretariat and relevant institutions. In this regard, the Executive Secretary of the Convention is requested to transmit decision IV/7 of the Conference of Parties to IFF at its second session.

D. Fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought

Conclusions

59. Although only a limited number of new initiatives have been launched since the IPF process, a significant number of activities are already ongoing in many countries, which are included in the programmes of several international organizations in the context of the implementation of the desertification Convention.

Preliminary proposals for action

60. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Encourage the close coordination of activities related to national forest programmes with the implementation of the United Nations conventions on climate change, biological diversity and - especially - combating desertification;

(b) Consider the special needs for forest-related ODA of countries affected by desertification and drought.

E. Impact of airborne pollution on forests

Conclusions

61. There are lessons to be learned from the experience of forest decline worldwide and the ongoing monitoring of the effects on forests of airborne pollution in general and of certain types of emissions, such as sulphur. The need and possibilities for extension of monitoring to areas not currently covered should be considered. There is also a need to encourage specific national commitments to further reducing emissions of damaging airborne pollution, especially by countries not currently parties to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. The need for further research to strengthen analysis of the available data and promote cooperation between research and monitoring of pollutant depositions needs consideration. There is a need for further dissemination of information to the public and for access to data for potential users, such as forest managers and policy makers.

Preliminary proposals for action

62. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Review lessons learned from the experience of forest decline worldwide, and from the ongoing monitoring of the effects on forests of airborne pollution in general and certain types of emissions, such as sulphur, in particular;

(b) Consider the possibilities for the extension of monitoring to areas not currently covered, and encourage national commitments to further reducing

emissions of damaging airborne pollution, especially by countries not currently parties to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution;

(c) Emphasize the need for further research to strengthen the analysis of available data, and the need for the coordination and promotion of cooperation in research and monitoring of pollutant depositions;

(d) Consider the need for further dissemination of information to the public and access to data for potential users, such as forest managers and policy makers.

F. Needs and requirements of developing and other countries with low forest cover

63. The outcome of the various ongoing activities under this IPF programme element will be included in UNEP's input to the Secretary-General's report for substantive discussions at the third session of IFF.

G. Financial assistance

64. Preliminary proposals for action include a call for increased ODA for sustainable forest management in developing countries; consideration of emerging revenue sources of forests, increased rent capture and increased private investment; and review of the Global Environment Facility mechanism in relation to the proposal to establish an international forest fund (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/7).

H. Technology transfer and capacity-building and information

65. Preliminary proposals for action include a comprehensive assessment of technology needs, increased south-south and trilateral cooperation, and consideration of modern wood energy technologies as a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/4).

I. Assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests

Conclusions

66. A number of national, subregional, regional and global-level activities in progress will contribute to the quality of national-level forest resource assessments, as well as to FRA 2000, mainly through improved country capacity-building. It remains clear that in many cases, developing countries need technical and financial assistance to enhance their capacity to conduct forest resources assessments and to use such information for planning sustainable forest management.

67. Progress is being made in the collection of a core set of information on a broad range of forest values, including non-timber values, for all developing and industrialized countries.

68. Several components of FRA 2000 are still unfunded, in particular the remote sensing programme, for which no extrabudgetary resources have been received.

Preliminary proposals for action

69. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Examine capacity-building needs for forest resources assessment in developing countries;

(b) Consider the needs for funding of components of FRA 2000, which are still inadequately funded;

(c) Encourage and support the strengthening of partnerships and information sharing mechanisms related to the assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests.

J. Forest research

70. Strengthening and redefinition of priority areas in forest science is needed. The involvement of the eventual clients of forest research - not only in the identification of research topics but also in the conduct of research activities - is critical for improving the application of research outputs. The new broad international concern of societies about the nature and range of forest issues requires a re-examination of forest research institutions, as well as of the "culture" of forest research. What type of new approaches and new alliances are needed now and for the future? Equal emphasis should be placed on how research gets done and on what is done.

Preliminary proposals for action

71. CIFOR will prepare inputs for the third session of IFF based on, inter alia, the ICRIS process.

K. Methodologies for the proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests

72. Only limited progress has been made on this topic since the IPF process. The proposals for action formulated by IPF are still valid and need to be implemented. The Kyoto Protocol, increasing concerns over water scarcity and conservation and the use of biological diversity, together with growing revenues from ecotourism, have provided further evidence of the importance of the proper valuation of the environmental and other services provided by forests.

L. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

Conclusions

73. International processes for defining criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management have made significant progress. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management have proven to be useful tools in country-driven efforts to incorporate a wide array of forest-related values within a common conceptual framework.

74. Operational-level criteria and indicators applicable at the forest management unit level have been developed to complement national criteria and indicators within the framework of eight international initiatives.

75. There is still a very significant number of countries which are not currently participating actively in international criteria and indicators initiatives.

76. Increased efforts are urgently needed at the country and forest management unit levels for the implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

77. There is a need to ensure continued dialogue among ongoing and new and emerging initiatives, and to ensure that the criteria and indicators developed and implemented by countries within the framework of these processes are mutually compatible and contribute towards a common understanding of sustainable forest management.

Preliminary proposals for action

78. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Emphasize the need to continue efforts to assist countries that are not participating actively in the international criteria and indicators initiatives in engaging in these activities;

(b) Urge countries to increase efforts for country-level implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Countries that have advanced with respect to implementation should be encouraged to share their experiences and assist others;

(c) Encourage and support continued dialogue among ongoing and new and emerging initiatives, and ensure that criteria and indicators developed and implemented by countries within the framework of these processes are mutually compatible, and that they contribute towards a common understanding of sustainable forest management. The development of joint brochures and work on common terminology needs to be continued;

(d) Encourage countries concerned to ensure the compatibility of criteria and indicators being implemented at the national level and being developed at the forest management unit level;

(e) Encourage and support continued and increased efforts by international agencies and national institutes to streamline action related to criteria and indicators with national forest assessment and with the FAO Global Forest Resources Programme.

M. Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services

79. Preliminary proposals for action include further reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in forest products, conducting analyses of potential competition between wood and non-wood substitutes, considering international timber certification, and improving market transparency and intelligence (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/3).

Overall conclusion

80. Since the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests concluded its work in February 1997, countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and a significant number of international forums have endorsed the outcome of IPF and called for the implementation of the proposals for action. The preliminary results of the many initiatives taken to date by a number of countries and interested parties indicate that although the proposals for action do not constitute a formal and coherent plan of action, the proposals make sense in the national context.

81. There is, however, a clear need for continuing political support for this process, as well as increased international support for developing countries, in particular to those who are not currently able to attract private-sector investment in forest and forest-related activities.

82. There is also a clear need to monitor and evaluate progress towards sustainable forest management, as provided under IFF programme element I.b. Only through a long-term process of monitoring and evaluating progress will it be possible to make the necessary adjustments to ongoing initiatives and launch additional initiatives in support of the conservation, management and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Preliminary proposals for action

83. A key factor in the concerted efforts of supporting the overall implementation of the IPF proposals for action is the facilitation, catalysing and clearing-house roles and functions of the members of the informal high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests. The Forum may wish to call upon donor countries to:

(a) Support the ITFF implementation plan by screening project proposals in line with the IPF proposals for action and in agreement with the division of labour agreed within ITFF;

(b) Involve ITFF members as partners in support programmes for implementation of the IPF proposals for action at the national, regional and global levels;

(c) Encourage inter-agency partnerships as a crucial supportive mechanism to use existing institutions and resources in the most cost-effective and efficient manner.